



# Living in Community

June 21, 2021

Mayor and City Council, City of New Westminster  
511 Royal Avenue  
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9

Sent via email: [clerks@newwestcity.ca](mailto:clerks@newwestcity.ca), ATTN Mayor and Council

Dear Mayor Coté and Council,

I am writing to you on behalf of Living in Community (LIC), a provincial non-profit organization that is based in Vancouver and works across BC. Centering sex workers' rights, Living in Community convenes diverse stakeholders in order to: understand a range of experiences and perspectives about sex work; inform sex work-related policies and practices of governments, service providers, and community organizations; and provide education and training to support these goals. We focus on root causes including colonization, capitalism, racism, criminalization, and discrimination that create systemic vulnerability for sex workers as well as other community members. Living in Community's staff and Steering Committee include individuals who are experiential in sex work, and our work is driven by the needs and voices of sex workers.

We are writing in support of Motion 33 on the agenda for the City Council meeting tonight, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2021. This motion calls for two actions: first, that the City of New Westminster holds a workshop for City Council and senior staff to learn more about sex worker safety, and second, that staff report back to Council with best practices and recommendations on policies and programs that further support sex worker safety.

Living in Community has been delivering training about a collaborative and community-based approach to sex work and community safety since 2013. Nearly 2,000 people have now attended our effective and eye-opening trainings. We have trained service providers and policymakers across BC, the Yukon, and Newfoundland; participants have included employment counselors, healthcare workers, municipal government staff, community policing centre volunteers, police officers in training, and more.

Our training covers not just best practices for sex worker safety, but also the often-unconscious biases and stereotypes which we all hold and which may affect how we deliver services to sex workers. Without first understanding how one views sex work, it is difficult to deliver safe, trauma-informed, and person-centred policies and programs. Our training examines individual, organizational and societal beliefs, values and understandings of sex work, and explores how these impact the delivery of support services and also sex workers' access to services.

We also have significant experience working with municipalities, particularly the City of Vancouver, in their development of best practices for sex worker safety. In 2011, the City of Vancouver produced a report, *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults & Neighbourhoods Affected by Sex Work*, which was a comprehensive approach and action plan for sex worker safety. The following year, a City Task Force was convened to help implement recommendations from this Report. The task force included several members of Living in Community. The City also hired two social planners specializing in sex worker safety, and over the years we have worked closely with these social planners to advance a collaborative approach and ensure sex workers' needs are included in municipal decision-making.

Living in Community supports Motion 33 and would be happy to provide education and resources in support of the implementation of both actions in this motion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Halena Seiferling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'S' at the end.

Halena Seiferling  
Executive Director, Living in Community  
[director@livingincommunity.ca](mailto:director@livingincommunity.ca)